

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20

OMB-01 CU-05 DRC-01 /117 W
----- 114409

R 030855Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7344

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 15947

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TH

SUBJ: PRIME MINISTER SANYA TAKES SICK LEAVE

REF: A. BANGKOK 15833

B. FBIS D030930Z OCT 74

C. FBIS D030408Z OCT 74

D. BANGKOK 15891

SUMMARY:

THE PRIME MINISTER HAS TAKEN SICK LEAVE AS THE NATION
PREPARES FOR THE OCTOBER 14 COMMEMORATION CEREMONIES.
THE POSSIBILITY OF DEMONSTRATIONS WHEN THE ASSEMBLY
VOTES ON THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION ON OCTOBER 5 HAS DE-
CREASED. THE PERIOD AROUND OCTOBER 14 LOOMS AS THE NEXT
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HURDLE. END SUMMARY.

1. THE THAI GOVERNMENT HAS OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THAT PRIME MINISTER SANYA THAMMASAK HAS ABSENTED HIMSELF FROM HIS OFFICIAL DUTIES FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD BECAUSE OF HIS HEALTH (REF B). HE REMAINS IN BANGKOK, HOWEVER, AND AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATION IF THE NEED ARISES. SANYA APPARENTLY ANNOUNCED HIS DECISION TO THE OCTOBER 1 CABINET MEETING AND TURNED THE GAVEL OVER THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAKOB HUTASING.

2. AS THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NLA) APPROACHES ITS THIRD READING VOTE ON THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION, SUPPORT FOR PASSAGE CONTINUES TO GROW. OVER THE WEEKEND THAI AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS PROMINENTLY REPORTED THAT DR. PUAI UNGPHAKON, WHO CHAMPIONED THE STUDENT PROTESTORS' CAUSE ON THE FLOOR OF THE ASSEMBLY, WILL VOTE FOR THE DRAFT AS IT NOW STANDS. A BACKLASH TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S EARLIER VACILLATION IN THE FACE OF THE ACTIVIST PROTESTS HAS STIFFENED DETERMINATION TO SEE THE CONSTITUTION PASSED IN VARIOUS NLA CIRCLES.

3. POLITICAL ACTIVISTS AND THEIR UNIVERSITY STUDENT ALLIES HAVE ALREADY BACKED OFF FROM CONFRONTATION WITH THE NLA OVER THE CONSTITUTION (REF D). THIS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES THE POSSIBILITY OF UNTOWARD INCIDENTS WHEN THE ASSEMBLY TAKES THE THIRD READING VOTE OCTOBER 5.

4. COMMENT: THE HUBBUB CENTERED ON THE THIRD READING OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION APPEARS TO BE ENDING WITH A WHIMPER INSTEAD OF A BANG. SANYA'S SYMBOLIC ABSENCE FROM THE SCENE AS THE NATION APPROACHES THE OCTOBER COMMEMORATION CEREMONIES IS AN INDICATION, HOWEVER, THAT SOME OF THE RESTRAINT OF COMPROMISE WHICH SANYA REPRESENTS HAS BEEN REMOVED. MOST GROUPS PROBABLY WILL BE SOBERED BY THE REALIZATION, THOUGH THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME SMALL GROUPS MAY SEE INSECURITIES OR OPPORTUNITIES IN THIS SITUATION WHICH THEY FEEL THEY CAN EXPLOIT.

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